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**DC History Course Syllabus**

**Washington-Latin PCS**

**Mr. Dumas**

Email: jdumas@latinpcs.org

*"The disadvantage of men not knowing the past is that they do not know the present. History is a hill or high point of vantage, from which alone men see the town in which they live or the age in which they are living. Without some such contrast or comparison, without some such shifting of the point of view, we should see nothing whatever of our own social surroundings.”* -GK Chesterton

In this course, we will explore the Magnificent City of Washington DC. Our journey begins with the land, its people and the creation of the Nation's Capital. We will discuss provocative issues affecting all citizens who live, work and play in DC. Topics such as class, race, geography, politics, education, sports, voting, gentrification, and community will be discussed. In addition, students will be expected to speak and write about their family history, neighborhoods, and their favorite part of the city. Students will also be asked to speak and write about things they want to change in DC. Most importantly, we will travel and explore the city, host guest speakers, and debate issues that are important to us.

**Assessment:** How will I be graded? There are a variety of ways to show you are learning in this class:

* **(15%) Homework** – Students will be given homework on a regular basis. Students are asked to take pride in their work, and will be asked to re-do assignments that do not follow this standard. There will be no late work accepted in this class. If it is not done on the day it is due, it will be marked as a zero.
* **(30%) Tests and Quizzes –** Students will be given tests and quizzes on a regular basis. These will be designed to gauge how well a student understands information, and will be based in most cases on notes, homework assignments, discussions, and in class readings.
* **(10%) Current Events Presentations** – Every Friday in DC History is current events day. Each Friday, two students will present on a news article of their choice, and be required not only to understand the facts of the article, but to communicate it eloquently and effectively. This assignment exists in addition to assignments given that week, and will be a significant portion of the quarterly grade.
* **(10%) Socratic Seminars –** Students will engage in Socratic Seminars on a regular basis. These graded discussions are primarily student-led, and are centered upon a central question or topic that is related to a given unit of study. While speaking is required in these seminars, a heavy emphasis will be on listening to classmates and providing written reflections based on the discussion.
* **(20%) Participation –** All students are expected to participate in class on a regular basis. While participation does refer to speaking out loud, it also includes being on time, prepared for class, and engaged with material at hand. The day’s warm-up will be included in the participation grade.
* **(15%) Warm-Ups** – Each day, students are asked to write a journal prompt about the content covered during class, the things they experience living in DC, or a free-write option.

**Skills**

*How will I benefit once this class is over?* Over the course of the year, we will work on different skills. This is separate from knowledge, things that can be learned about and memorized. Skills are different in that you will be asked to *show* you that you can do something. All of the skills that are worked on in this class are 21st century skills, transferrable to any work environment.

* **Map Reading** – This class will have a heavy emphasis on maps, as this class explores the relationship between *place* and *history*. For example, we’ll try to understand the different attitudes, stereotypes and ideas in this city by studying differences in the physical area of the city. As the city grows, it becomes more complex.
* **Public Speaking and Facilitation** – There will be an emphasis on public speaking in this class, primarily through regular current events presentations. Students will be asked to know the facts, and explore what good public speaking is and is not throughout the semester.
* **Listening –** How well do you listen to your classmates in discussions? Are you responding to what they have said and moving the conversation forward, or are you talking simply to be heard? Are you able to work well with others? (Socratic Seminars, presentations, class discussion)
* **Reading and Writing** – As in most classes, an emphasis will be on reading and writing, as the two universal skills are necessary for success both in and out of school.

**Class Policies:** Each student is expected to follow these basic rules:

* Be ready to learn and ask plenty of questions.
* Respect your classmates and your teacher.
* Share your knowledge**.**

**Please have this signed and returned tomorrow!**

**Student Signature \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Parent/Guardian Signature\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

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